BENGALURU, MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026 www.Bangaloremirror.com 12 Pages PRICE ₹3

Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 33 | Min 19 | Humidity 22% Clear sky Sensex 74,563 | Nifty 23,151 | Gold 1,58,409 | Silver 2,59,297 | Dollar 92.47 | Euro 105.88 | GBP 122.46

87% Indians agree YouTube creators are the most trusted

(vs 78% for competition)

YouTube drives 2.3x incremental ROAS vs social media

There's only one YouTube

Source
1. Google/Kantar, Future of Video, n=1053 YouTube viewers, n=2296 weekly video viewers 18-64 (IN), fielded from (3/13/25-4/21/25). Competitive set includes 10 market competitors: Linear TV, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, Sony LIV, Jio, MX Player, Facebook, Instagram, Moj MX Takatak, ZEE5.
2. Equity-to-Sales MMM Meta Analysis commissioned by Google, covering a 2-year measurement period of 20 CPG brands from across the 2021-2023 timeframe. "Long-term ROAS" is defined as impact of each marketing channel in driving brand equity & this brand equity's impact in driving sales, relative to the marketing channel's media spend.

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SILT SHOW

Empty bed of 108-acre Ulsoor Lake creates alarm, but officials say work is on to remove silt accumulated over 25 years

PAGE 4

HEATED RIVALRY

As 629 companies shifted offices from K'taka to other states in 2021-2026, Hyd emerges as rival to B'luru

PAGE 6

Central Pollution Board's final guidelines on storage and handling of solar photovoltaic panel waste sounds all good, but lacks clarity on rooftop solar in residential sector, say city-based experts and implementation is another ball game altogether

SUNNY SIDE DOWN

Solar waste can't be dumped in landfills as it can cause toxic chemicals to enter groundwater or soil

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The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has issued its final guidelines for the storage and handling of waste solar photovoltaic modules or panels.

The guidelines issued under E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022, talk about safe handling, transportation, and storage of discarded solar modules. A draft guideline was released by the Board in June last year.

As per the guidelines, solar waste should not be disposed of or dumped in an open area or landfill, as it may result in the release of toxic chemicals into the environment. The waste intended for recycling should be handed over to a registered recycler of e-waste. Producers and manufacturers are also supposed to devise a collection mechanism for bulk consumers and publicize their collection system.

Solar waste should be transported only in covered trucks and must follow the provisions under Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 »

"Solar waste is going to be the next big waste for Bengaluru, which also needs to be managed. Since it falls under the hazardous category, proper collection, transportation, and recycling of this waste will be crucial

—V Ram Prasad, solid waste management expert

Port of despair

Exports of granite, Byadgi chilli, areca plates and other K'taka-specific products hit

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The ongoing conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran in West Asia has hit Karnataka's export sector, with several industries reporting disruptions in shipments, rising logistics costs and delayed payments.

Exporters across sectors say the geopolitical tensions have slowed trade with West Asian markets, which remain key destinations for many products from the state. Industries ranging from granite and agricultural produce to handicrafts and manufactured goods are now facing uncertainty as global supply chains come under strain.

PAGE 7: NO TAKERS FOR TOMATO

Granite gloom

The granite industry in Chamarajanagar district, known for its premium black granite, is among the sectors feeling the impact. While the stone is exported to several countries including the United States and Europe, exporters say shipments to West Asian markets have slowed considerably.

"Black granite from Chamarajanagar has global recognition because of its superior quality. However, the war has affected exports and the industry is facing serious difficulties," said GM Hegde, president of the Chamarajanagar Mine Owners'

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 »

THINGS TO DO

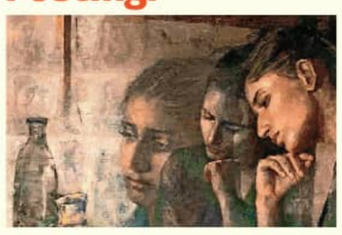
01 Work of art

The 9th edition of the Whitefield Art Collective (WAC) is being held under the theme 'Tomorrow, Altered!', featuring over 300 works across fine art, sculptures, installations, photography exhibitions, and curated artist showcases. **Where: VR Bengaluru, Whitefield Main Road; When: Until April 12**

02 Classical symphony

Banyan Tree Events is presenting Symphony of Santoor, a grand musical experience which reimagines the instrument within a sweeping orchestral canvas, while retaining the depth and purity of Indian classical tradition. **Where: Maanikya Hall, Chamara Vajra; When: March 18, 8 pm**

03 Art thou resting?



ArtFlute is presenting Choosing to Rest, an online exhibition that explores rest not as inactivity, but as presence, a moment of listening to the body, intuition, and inner rhythm in a world defined by speed and constant output. **Where: ArtFlute Online Gallery (www.artflute.com); When: Until April 10**

04 Eco echoes

Hosachiguru Farm Showcase, a three-day event, brings the concept of farm and farmhouse living to urban audiences. Visitors can explore how managed farms can offer city residents a weekend retreat and a closer connection with nature. **Where: Hosachiguru Corporate Office, Jayanagar; When: March 20, 21, 22**

05 Play time

Ranga Shankara is presenting 'Chippi, The Chipkali', a puppet play featuring the tale of a baby lizard who loses its tail and is mocked by others, as part of Take a Child to the Theatre 2026 campaign. **Where: Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar; When: March 20, 7.30 pm**

Two-year limit introduced for II PU improvement exams

Students who fail in the second Pre-University (II PU) examination or wish to improve their marks will now get only a two-year window to reappear for the exams. The Education Department has issued a new order stating that candidates can attempt improvement exams only in the year they register and the following academic year. Under the revised rule, students who appear for the three annual exam opportunities in a particular year must complete any attempt to improve marks or results within the next year's three annual exam cycles. After the two-year period, no further opportunity will be provided. The rule will come into effect from the current academic year and will apply to regular, private and repeat students. Earlier, students were allowed up to six attempts to improve their results without any time limit. The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board said the change was introduced to address technical difficulties in managing long-term student records and the additional workload of printing and replacing mark cards whenever candidates improved their results. **— BMB**

Infants found to have antibiotic resistance

Study finds that infants carry genes conferring resistance to commonly used antibiotic classes, with data showing rise in resistance genes at 6 and 14 weeks before declining at 36 weeks

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A team of health researchers from Karnataka has uncovered that infants carry a wide range of antibiotic resistance genes in their gut during the earliest weeks of life, with prevalence peaking within the first few months after birth. The study sheds light on how Caesarean section delivery mode and maternal antibiotic exposure may influence antibiotic resistance patterns in infants.

The research paper titled 'Temporal dynamics & determinants of antibiotic resistance gene profiles in the infant gut during the first year of life' published on ResearchGate, examined how antibiotic resistance genes appear and change in the gut microbiome of infants during the first year of life.

Researchers enrolled 68 healthy, full-term newborns, of which 54 infants completed the study protocol by providing stool samples at all four timepoints: at birth, 6 weeks, 14 weeks and 36 weeks. In total, 216 stool samples were collected and analysed. Infants who failed to provide one or more samples were excluded from further analysis.

The cohort included a nearly equal distribution of infants born through different delivery methods, with 48 per cent delivered via Caesarean section and 52 per cent through vaginal delivery. Additionally, 44 per cent of mothers had received cephalosporin antibiotics postpartum, allowing researchers to assess how maternal antibiotic exposure might influence ARG carriage in infants. The findings revealed that infants predominantly carried genes conferring resistance to commonly used antibiotic classes. Resistance genes linked to beta-lactam antibiotics were present in 80.6 per cent of samples, followed by macrolides (MSLB) at 70 per cent and sulphonamides at 61 per cent. Importantly, ARG carriage was found to increase during the early weeks of life.

Dr Mamatha Ballal, Professor of Microbiology, Head of Enteric Diseases Division, Department of Microbiology, KMC Manipal said, "With the support from the institution and officials we could carry out this study. Our study found that a significant proportion of infants already carried at least one antibiotic resistance gene at birth before any antibiotic was ever given to them directly." Dr Ballal explained that these were not specific to one antibiotic class but spanned multiple classes including beta-lactams, macrolides, and sulphonamides. "This suggests that bacteria carrying these genes are transferred from the mother to the baby during and immediately after birth, through the birth canal, skin contact, and the surrounding environment. However, our study observed this pattern rather than directly proving the transfer mechanism, which would require further investigation such as matching the mother's bacterial profile with the baby's," said Dr Ballal.

Dr Ballal said that the data clearly showed a sharp rise in resistance genes at 6 and 14 weeks before declining at 36 weeks. "While our study demonstrates this spike clearly, we cannot fully explain the exact reasons. Our study lacked metagenomic sequencing which would have helped us understand this better. We believe feeding practices, environmental exposure, and maternal antibiotic use likely contribute," she said.

Interestingly, the study highlighted that C-section babies are said to carry more resistance genes. The findings suggest that antibiotic use around childbirth should be carefully considered. "While our study was conducted on a single centre with a limited sample size, which limits how broadly these findings can be applied, the associations we found are strong enough to warrant attention from clinicians and policymakers," said Dr Ballal.

Experts suggest supporting vaginal delivery where it is medically safe, promoting exclusive breast feeding, and cautious use of antibiotics around childbirth, based on study findings

Based on the findings, the doctor suggested supporting vaginal delivery where it is medically safe, promoting exclusive breastfeeding, and being cautious about antibiotic use around childbirth.

City agencies need to be roped in to help with disposal

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Movement) Rules, 2016. Experts point out that improper management of end-of-life solar waste may pose environmental and health risks. While the CPCB's guideline is welcome, strict implementation holds the key, they said.

"Solar waste is going to be the next big waste for Bengaluru, which also needs to be managed. Since it falls under the hazardous category, proper collection, transportation, and recycling of this waste will be crucial. We welcome the guidelines by CPCB. At the same time, local authorities need to ensure that loopholes are plugged. The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board must ensure its strict implementation," said V Ram Prasad, a solid waste management expert in the city.

As per the guidelines, solar waste includes end-of-life solar photo-voltaic modules or panels or cells, whole or in part discarded as waste, rejects and waste generated from manufacturing, refurbishment, and repair processes, and solar panels damaged during their transportation, handling, storage, and installation.

Safe disposal is necessary as panels consist of materials such as glass, aluminum, silicon, plastic, and metals like copper, silver, lead, cadmium, tellurium, gallium, arsenic, tin, etc., many of which can leach into the groundwater and soil, contaminating these natural resources.

However, experts say the guideline lacks clarity on decommissioned panels from rooftop solar in the residential sector. In Bengaluru, agencies such as BESCOM and City Corporation can play important roles to ensure the scientific disposal of this hazardous waste. Under the guidelines, manufacturers, producers, and recyclers have been assigned responsibilities to ensure compliance through registration, storing the waste solar modules or panels up to 2034-35.

"The biggest concern in safe disposal of this hazardous waste is the retail market, such as individual rooftop panels and other small industries. Although the volume of waste generated by these sources is less, strict guidelines are required. In such cases, BESCOM can become a collection point through a reward system. Responsible disposal by independent houses should be compensated to ensure compliance," said aid Ramesh Shivanna, president of the Karnataka Renewable Energy Systems Manufacturers Association (KRESMA).

Travel insurance in the time of war

What it really covers

Rising tensions in West Asia have caused flight disruptions and left thousands of travellers stranded, including many Indians in the UAE and nearby regions. As uncertainty increases, travellers are looking to extend their travel insurance policies to ensure they're covered during extended stays abroad. However, many don't realise that insurance policies often have strict exclusions for disruptions directly linked to war or armed conflict.

Why war is usually excluded from travel insurance

Most travel insurance policies worldwide exclude losses caused directly by war, invasion, or large-scale military conflicts. Insurers design policies mainly to cover everyday travel risks such as illness, accidents, airline strikes, weather disruptions, or technical issues. When disruptions occur due to military actions or hostilities, the insurance policy typically does not cover related financial losses.

War disruptions can affect travel far beyond the conflict zone

The impact of conflicts is not limited to the countries involved in the fighting. Airspace closures and security restrictions can disrupt international flight routes across regions.

For example, travellers heading to Europe may also face delays or cancellations if aircraft cannot fly over conflict zones. However, insurance coverage still depends on whether the disruption is directly caused by war.

Flight cancellations due to war: Who pays the cost?

If flights are cancelled because airspace is closed due to military conflict, travel insurance usually will not cover trip interruption or cancellation claims. In such situations, the airline becomes the first point of contact for refunds, rescheduling, or cancellations.

Many airlines provide waivers or free rescheduling during extraordinary geopolitical situations.

Common travel disruptions that insurance does cover

Travel insurance can still protect you against routine travel risks unrelated to war. These include sudden illness, medical emergencies, accidents, airline strikes, aircraft technical problems, bad weather, or natural disasters. If your travel plans are affected by these situations, insurers usually process claims according to policy terms.

Situations where claims may be rejected during conflicts

Claims are often denied if losses are directly linked to armed conflict. Examples include injuries caused by military attacks, forced evacuation due to war, or travel cancellations resulting from conflict-related airspace closures. Because these risks are considered extraordinary and unpredictable, they are typically excluded from most standard travel insurance policies.

Evacuation from war zones: Usually not covered

When conflicts escalate, governments may arrange evacuation flights for citizens abroad. However, travel insurance policies usually do not reimburse evacuation costs related to war or civil unrest.

Even student travel insurance plans that cover emergency medical evacuation generally apply only when evacuation is required due to illness or accidents, not armed conflict.

Medical emergencies may still be covered

Even in regions experiencing conflict, travel insurance often continues to cover medical emergencies unrelated to the war. If a traveller falls ill or suffers an accident, insurers may pay for emergency treatment or hospitalisation depending on the policy. Some plans may also cover treatment related to pre-existing diseases during emergency situations. **ET Online**

Gen Z to drive USD 1.3 trillion spending in India by 2030: Report

By 2030, Gen Z will comprise 27 per cent of India's population and will command USD 1.3 trillion in consumption, reshaping consumer markets with a focus on experiences, sustainability and digital convenience, according to a report by Redseer Strategy Consultants.

The report, titled "Gen Z: Defining Trends, Influencing Spends," analyses how this demographic, born between 1997 and 2012, is prioritising value-driven choices.

"Gen Z will occupy a greater share of the population, and command USD 1.3 trillion in consumption by 2030. This generation shuns labels, valuing inclusivity, self-expression and authenticity. Through this phase of self-discovery, they prioritise aesthetics and new experiences -- all of which reflect in their behaviour as consumers," the report noted.

Gen Z's emphasis on aesthetics is evident in their engagement with the beauty and personal care (BPC) sector. By 2030, this group is projected to account for nearly USD 19 billion share of India's BPC market.

One in two Gen Z women allocates more than 20 per cent of their disposable income to BPC products.

The average number of products used by this demographic has doubled, with separate routines for skin, hair, and body care. **PTI**

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Ulsoor's 25-year clean-up creates a storm in a dry lake

Panic spreads after photos on social media show the Ulsoor Lake bed exposed, prompting questions over the sudden disappearance of water

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Images of the nearly empty bed of the 108-acre Ulsoor Lake circulating on social media created alarm among residents last fortnight, but officials say the development is part of a major restoration project to remove 25 years of accumulated silt and improve the lake's long-term health. The large-scale desilting work, currently underway, is aimed at increasing the lake's depth, boosting water storage capacity and improving groundwater levels in surrounding areas.

The sudden sight of the drained lake triggered widespread reactions online, with many citizens initially fearing a natural disaster or linking it to Bengaluru's ongoing water concerns. Several residents shared photographs of the exposed lakebed and questioned the timing of the project. Some netizens expressed concern that draining the lake during early summer could affect groundwater levels, while others urged authorities to complete the work before the April rains or the monsoon to prevent flooding in nearby localities.

However, officials clarified that the exercise is part of a comprehensive development plan for one of the city's prominent lakes. According to Rajendra Cholan, Commissioner of the Bengaluru Central City Corporation, the desilting work is necessary to restore the lake's capacity after decades of sediment build-up. "Desilting work is being carried out to remove silt that has accumulated over the past 25 years. This will increase the depth of the lake, significantly improve its water-holding capacity and also help raise surrounding groundwater levels," Cholan said.

Authorities explained that removing the thick silt layer will enable the lake to store fresh rainwater more effectively in the coming seasons, strengthening its ecological role within the city.

Public infrastructure

The lake redevelopment project also focuses on improving public access and recreational facilities. A two-level walkway with bund protection is being built around the lake so that visitors can walk comfortably and safely. "The walkway will provide citizens with a safe and convenient path to walk, relax and maintain better health, while also protecting the lake bund," the commissioner said. In addition, ornamental grills are being installed along the lake boundary to enhance safety and improve the visual appeal of the waterfront. Another important component of the project is the reconstruction of the lake's three islands, which are currently in a deteriorated condition. "The three islands in Ulsoor Lake will be reconstructed as part of the development works to improve the lake's ecosystem and overall environment," Cholan said. A connecting bridge linking the lake area with a nearby park is also under construction to improve accessibility for visitors.

Green spaces

The park area surrounding the lake will be developed further with new plant species to enhance greenery and support biodiversity. Seating arrangements are also being planned to create comfortable spaces for walkers and visitors. Officials also noted that the increased water depth after desilting will make part of the lake suitable for training activities by National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel. "Through these initiatives, our objective is to maintain the ecological balance of Halasuru Lake while providing citizens with a pleasant space for recreation and relaxation," Cholan said.

Authorities have urged the public not to panic, emphasising that the temporary draining is part of a planned effort to restore the lake and improve its sustainability for the future.

Dumping ground no more!

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Finally, it is a great relief for people residing around an abandoned plot overgrown with weeds at 1st Cross, Vivekananda Nagar, in Maruthi Seva Nagar ward. The residents want to thank and appreciate the Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC) authorities for removing the weeds from the abandoned site. Bangalore Mirror published a story, "Vacant site becomes dumping ground amid official silence," on March 4, 2026, narrating how residents around the abandoned site had been battling an ever-growing menace.

Now, the residents are happy. Stating that the clearing of the abandoned plot at Vivekananda Nagar 1st Cross has brought immense relief to residents who had been living with the problem for a long time, Mohan Nair, a resident of 1st Cross, Vivekananda Nagar, said the site had become overgrown with thick weeds and had effectively turned into a dumping ground, creating serious concerns about mosquitoes, snakes and other health hazards for families in the neighbourhood. "We sincerely thank Bangalore Mirror for highlighting the issue through the report 'Vacant site becomes dumping ground amid official silence', dated March 4. It is encouraging to see that responsible journalism can still prompt quick action on civic matters affecting ordinary citizens," said Mohan Nair. He said that, at the same time, the incident raises a larger concern. According to him, residents had repeatedly approached civic authorities earlier, but received no response. He added that such issues concerning empty or abandoned plots should be addressed promptly through regular civic monitoring and citizen grievance systems rather than requiring media intervention.

"Plot legality, ownership status, taxes payable, and site hygiene maintenance need to be periodically tracked. Any purchased site lying vacant for more than three years should be seized by the civic body. We appreciate the action taken now and hope authorities will remain proactive in ensuring such vacant plots do not become public health hazards again," he said. Mohammad Umair, a resident living beside the plot, said that as someone living right next to the abandoned site at Vivekananda Nagar 1st Cross, the situation had become very difficult for his family and other nearby residents. "The plot had slowly turned into an overgrown dumping ground where garbage accumulated and wild vegetation grew unchecked. It created constant worries about mosquitoes, rodents and snakes, especially during the rainy season.

Despite several requests to the authorities earlier, the problem continued for months. That is why we are grateful to Bangalore Mirror for bringing the issue to public attention," said Mohammad Umair. He said that soon after the report appeared, the thick weeds and overgrowth were cleared, bringing immediate relief to those living beside the plot. "We hope the authorities will continue monitoring such vacant sites so that neighbourhoods remain clean, safe and healthy for residents," he said.

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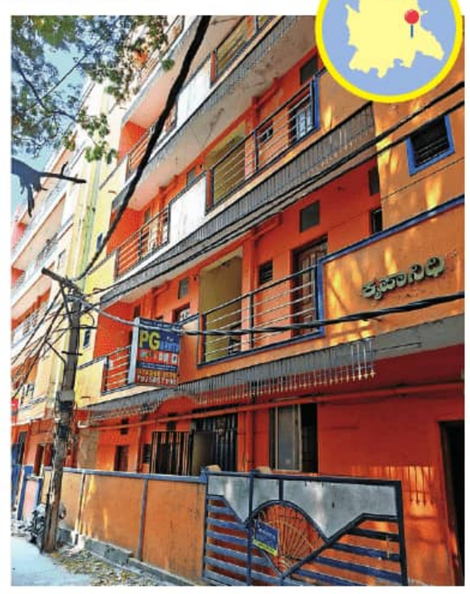
Road block

Indiranagar

A hoarding placed outside a shop on 80 Feet Road, Indiranagar, is causing an obstruction and concern among the public.

Power hazard

Madiwala



A fallen high-tension power line at 4th Main, Chinnamma Layout New Extension, Madiwala, is posing a serious safety hazard to residents.

Dark street

Palmgrove Cross Road

A streetlight at Palmgrove Cross Road in Victoria Layout has not been functioning for the past three months despite complaints to the BBMP and the contractor.

State told to respond to petition over use of veterinary campus land

The Karnataka High Court has issued notice to the state government on a petition challenging its decision to utilise land belonging to a veterinary university campus in Bengaluru for the construction of residential quarters for High Court judges.

A division bench comprising Justices DK Singh and TM Nadaf was hearing a public interest petition filed by the Karnataka Veterinary Association along with other organisations connected with the veterinary college and its alumni. The petition questions a government order issued on January 8, 2026, which approved the use of land located within the Government Veterinary College campus at Hebbal.

According to the petitioners, the order proposes the diversion of around seven acres of land belonging to the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University. The government has reportedly planned to use four acres of the land to construct additional residential quarters for judges of the High Court, while the remaining three acres have been earmarked for establishing a super-speciality hospital.

The organisations behind the petition further stated that representations had previously been submitted to the state government seeking reconsideration of the proposal. However, they allege that the decision to allocate the land was taken without sufficient consultation with stakeholders associated with the university.

IN HIGH COURT

During the preliminary hearing, the High Court directed the state government and other respondents to file their responses to the petition. The bench has granted them time to submit their objections. The court is expected to take up the matter again after receiving replies from the authorities concerned. **–BMB**

Lokayukta empowered to conduct departmental inquiries

The Karnataka High Court has upheld a regulation that allows the Karnataka Lokayukta to conduct departmental inquiries against employees of the Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPTCL).

A division bench comprising Justices DK Singh and S Rachaiah overturned an earlier order of a single judge that had struck down Regulation 14-A of the Karnataka Electricity Board Conduct, Discipline and Appeal Regulations. The provision enables KPTCL to entrust disciplinary inquiries to the Lokayukta after corruption allegations against its employees are investigated by the Lokayukta Police.

The earlier ruling had held that the regulation was unconstitutional, observing that permitting the same institution to investigate corruption allegations and later conduct departmental proceedings could give rise to bias and violate the principles of fairness guaranteed under Article 14 of the Constitution.

However, the division bench disagreed with this reasoning. It noted that the investigative and inquiry functions of the Lokayukta are handled by separate wings that operate independently. While the Lokayukta Police conduct criminal investigations into allegations of corruption, the inquiry wing is responsible for examining disciplinary charges in departmental proceedings.

The court observed that because these functions are performed by distinct authorities within the institution, the apprehension that the same body would act as both investigator and adjudicator was unfounded.

In light of these findings, the court allowed the appeals filed against the single judge's order and restored the validity of Regulation 14-A. **–BMB**

Falling for the same drains and promises

Despite changing administration, citizens highlight persistent woes over broken footpaths and unsafe drains posing risk to pedestrians who often end up injured

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Residents, particularly pedestrians and senior citizens, had anticipated improved quality in developmental works after the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) replaced the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in May 2025. However, concerns persist as the quality of work shows little change, with efficiency levels among engineers appearing largely unchanged under the new administration.

Roadside drains-cum-footpaths, intended to provide safer passage for pedestrians, continue to pose risks despite repeated incidents. Senior citizens have been among those injured in falls, yet civic authorities have not ensured pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. In one such case, Kathyayini Chamaraj slipped into a gap between broken concrete slabs on a drain-cum-footpath along Berlie Street in Shantinagar.

A girl fell into a roadside drain near Sri Subramanya Swamy Temple close to Halasuru Metro Station, prompting two men to rush to her aid. She slipped while walking on the drain-cum-footpath, where a concrete slab had become slippery. The then executive engineer of the major roads department addressed the issue, but the slabs at the same location have again turned slippery in recent days, posing risks to pedestrians, particularly those distracted while walking.

Sheshanarayan H, a journalist, got his ankle fractured while walking on the roadside drain-cum-footpath near Rajajinagar Cooperative Bank. He stated that while walking on the footpath at 7.30 pm on March 7, the stretch had no streetlights, and he failed to notice the concrete slabs that had been set aside. "I fell down and got my ankle fractured. I wrote a letter to Rajajinagar MLA S Suresh Kumar narrating how I fell down due to poor maintenance of the roadside drains. The next day, the BWCC engineer called me to enquire about the medical expenses. The engineer paid Rs 14,000 to me. I want the authorities to maintain the drain-cum-footpaths properly for the benefit of pedestrians," said Sheshanarayan, adding that he did not check whether or not the drain issue was fixed as he was advised bed rest.

BR Chandran, a social activist from Halasuru, said that many people, especially senior citizens, use the footpath near Sri Subramanya Swamy Temple. "I appeal to the authorities concerned to fix the problem on a permanent basis," he said.

Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) Executive Engineer (Shantinagar) Atif Mohammed said that he would look into the matter. "I will fix the footpath and the drain problem," he said.

Several spots across city are said to have damaged footpaths and missing drain covers

Citizens demand concrete action over recurring issue of lack of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure; officials assure measures to fix problem

NHAI raises FASTag Annual Pass charges

As per the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), the fare for the FASTag Annual Pass will be revised effective April 1, 2026. The cost has been increased to Rs 3,075 from the earlier Rs 3,000. The FASTag Annual Pass was announced in June 2025, with rollout beginning on August 15 last year.

Since its launch, more than 56 lakh users have subscribed to the scheme, with a notable rise among private vehicle owners. According to NHAI, the revised rates will apply to private vehicles such as cars, jeeps, and vans with a valid FASTag. The annual pass facility can be availed at around 1,150 fee plazas on National Expressways and Highways. As per the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, the revised fee is being carried out in accordance with the provisions of the National Highway Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008. Owners of private vehicles can avail the FASTag Annual Pass through the NHAI/MoRTH website or by downloading the Rajmarg Yatra app. **–BMB**

Teen dies in attempt to film social media video

A 15-year-old student of Class 10, identified as Nishanth, fell to his death from a rundown building in Bengaluru West in the evening hours of Friday.

As per the police, Nishanth left his house in Ullala around 4.30 pm and met two of his friends, and the trio decided to shoot reels at an abandoned resort in D Group Layout. Police officials say that the building had been abandoned for nearly 20 years due to legal disputes. Police suspect that the boys entered the property through a narrow passage behind the building's compound wall when the guard left for the day. The boy had climbed onto a wall of a tennis court and reached the fragile roof made of thin polycarbonate sheets used for lighting. The deceased stepped on a sheet and fell from a height of 35–40 feet. Nishanth was rushed to the nearest hospital by his friends, where he was declared dead due to severe head injuries. Police have registered a case of unnatural death at the Annapoorneshwarinagar Police Station. The deceased's parents have donated their son's eyes. **–BMB**

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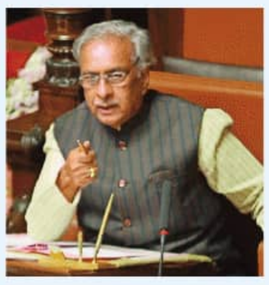
NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Untrue dream



A light moment occurred in the Legislative Council last Friday when JD(S) member SL Bhojegowda flagged poor attendance, joking that some "attraction" was needed to bring members in. Chairman Basavaraj Horatti quipped that Bhojegowda himself knew many ways to attract people. Bhojegowda later said he had dreamt the Chairman would resign over the House not functioning, but was relieved to see him presiding as usual the next day.

Déjà vu

Back in 2017, DK Shivakumar denied bringing Congress MLAs from Odisha to Bengaluru, saying they came on their own as the city felt "safe". He said the state party chief informed him and accommodation was arranged, adding he would do what the party directs.

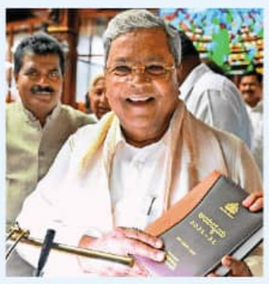
Portfolio reluctance

Siddaramaiah said he initially declined the Finance portfolio in 1994, preferring Revenue, but HD Deve Gowda insisted he take it as someone he trusted.
Opposition Leader R. Ashoka quipped that Siddaramaiah should thank Deve Gowda, as the role later saw him present the Budget many times.

Can't disclose

Whenever Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar visits Delhi, there is buzz that he is meeting the party high command to lobby for the CM's post. When journalists quizzed him about meeting senior leaders, DKS said he could not disclose details of the leaders he meets during his visits. He said he meets several people whenever he comes to the national capital.
"I meet everyone when I come to Delhi. You in the media report that I was made to wait by Delhi leaders, so I must be waiting," he said.
Shivakumar said he had travelled to Delhi to attend a wedding in a friend's family and had also met the president of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee. He added that several programmes were scheduled during the day, including the induction of leaders into the party.

Child's letter



A letter from fifth-grader Varnika about severe drinking water shortage in her village prompted the government of Karnataka to announce a 490-crore water supply scheme. Moved by her appeal, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah approved the Uduthorehalla project to draw water from the Cauvery River to fill tanks in Chamarajanagar district.

Ticket debate

Recently, Horticulture Minister SS Mallikarjun sharply questioned the role of his colleague and Waqf Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan in the upcoming candidate selection for the Davanagere South Assembly constituency.
Speaking to reporters, he asked why Zameer had come forward claiming to speak on behalf of the minority community regarding the ticket, calling it inappropriate.
Mallikarjun clarified that the opinions of all communities would be considered and that no individual would intervene in the process. He emphasised that the final decision on the candidate would rest with the party high command and that the party was committed to following that decision.

–Sridhar Vivan

Silicon city vs Cyberabad

Tech throne trembling: Bengaluru sees companies shifting bases, Hyderabad races ahead securing bulk global capability centre investments

Sridhar.Vivan
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FILE PHOTO

Government statistics indicate hundreds departing registrations as rival technology cluster gains momentum through infrastructure upgrades, corporate expansions, investor confidence

Bengaluru, long recognised as India's Silicon City and IT capital, is facing increasing competition as companies begin exploring other destinations for expansion. According to data presented in the Lok Sabha, as many as 629 companies shifted their registered offices from Karnataka to other states between 2021 and 2026.

At the same time, new investment trends show Hyderabad emerging as a strong alternative, with 35 of the 85 Global Capability Centres (GCCs) set up in India in 2025 choosing the Telangana capital, compared to only 21 in Bengaluru. These developments have raised concerns about whether the city could gradually lose some of its dominance in the technology sector.

Growing competition

Sources said the competition between major technology hubs has become more visible with the rapid expansion of GCCs across India. These centres are set up by multinational companies to handle global operations, research, technology development and coordination.

In 2025 alone, 85 new GCCs were established in the country. Of these, nearly 41 per cent, or 35 centres, were set up in Hyderabad, while Bengaluru attracted only 21.

Despite the recent shift in momentum, Bengaluru still hosts a significant number of GCCs, with about 875 centres compared to around 360 in Hyderabad. However, the growing share of new investments going to Hyderabad is being closely watched by industry observers.

Firm exodus

Data shared in Parliament by Union Minister of State for Corporate Affairs Harsh Malhotra in response to a question by K Sudhakar, Member of Parliament from Chikkaballapur, indicates that corporate relocations have been rising in recent years.

In 2020–21, about 129 companies moved their registered offices out of Karnataka. The number was 126 in 2021–22 and dropped to 88 in 2022–23, the lowest in the five-year period.

However, the trend reversed soon after, with 119 companies shifting in 2023–24 and a sharp rise to 167 companies in 2024–25, the highest figure in the period. The latest number represents nearly a 40 per cent increase over the previous year and almost a 90 per cent rise from the 2022–23 figure.

Malhotra said the state has also witnessed a significant number of companies being struck off the official register. Over the last five years, around 15,396 firms were removed under Section 48 of the Companies Act, 2013, which allows authorities to strike off inactive companies.

The number of companies struck off peaked at 6,100 in 2021–22, up from 1,025 in 2020–21, before declining to 1,615 by 2024–25. Hyderabad's growing appeal is driven by infrastructure growth, improved connectivity and new IT hubs. Firms such as L'Oréal, JPMorgan Chase, Oracle Corporation and Advanced Micro Devices are expanding there, strengthening its position as a global tech investment hub rivaling Bengaluru. Sources said growth in technology, pharmaceuticals and financial services is positioning Hyderabad as a global tech investment hub, challenging Bengaluru.

Village launches zero-dump drive

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A new community-driven initiative aimed at creating a clean and sustainable rural waste management system has been launched in Adakamaranahalli Grama Panchayat.

The programme, titled 'Namma Swachha Adakamaranahalli Grama Panchayat', seeks to transform the panchayat, comprising the villages of Adakamaranahalli, Makali and Harokyathanahalli, into a clean, healthy and zero-dump community through a structured and circular waste management system.

The event was held at a campus in Makali village on March 14 in the presence of panchayat leaders, community members and employees who volunteered for the initiative. Among those present was former Member of the Legislative Council E. Krishnappa, along with local panchayat representatives.

As part of the launch event, participants took part in a plog run around Makali village, collecting litter while jogging and segregating dry waste. Volunteers also carried out door-to-door awareness drives, educating residents on the importance of waste segregation and responsible disposal practices.

The initiative will be implemented over a six-month period, covering more than 3,000 households along with nearby commercial establishments. The project focuses on creating long-term behavioural change by promoting waste segregation at source and strengthening local waste management infrastructure.

Under the programme, dustbin kits will be distributed to households, and continuous awareness campaigns will be conducted to encourage residents to adopt sustainable waste practices. A central waste collection kiosk will also be set up within the panchayat to facilitate the collection of segregated waste and ensure proper disposal and recycling.

According to organisers, the effort aims to create a model panchayat for sustainable waste management, demonstrating how rural communities can implement circular economy practices through community participation and local governance support.

KG Umesh, Director – Human Resources, said the initiative focuses on building environmental responsibility at the grassroots level.

"The health of communities is closely linked to the well-being of the environment. Through this initiative, the goal is to encourage responsible waste management and segregation practices at the village level. By working with local leaders and residents, we hope to create lasting change that makes these villages cleaner and healthier places to live," he said.

Anirudh S Dutt, Founder and CEO of the NGO involved in the project, highlighted the importance of community participation in ensuring long-term success.

He said waste management often fails due to the lack of consistent segregation and collection systems, adding that involving residents and local leaders can bring lasting change. Organisers hope the initiative will encourage other rural communities to adopt sustainable waste practices through collaboration.

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personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I Manal Shandar Husain D/O, Mir Shandar Husain R/o 44/2 Lakshman Mudlier Street, Arnapoorna Mansion have changed my name to Manal Shandar Hussain .

I, Suman Basrur Ananth w/o Venkatesh M K R/o No.203, Vandana Enclave, 8th C main, Venkatapura, Koramangala, Bengaluru 560034 have changed my name to Suman Ananth. I shall be called by this name for all purposes

I, Vivek Vasant Hegde R/o No 227, A Palya road, Honnavar, Uttara Kannada 581334 have changed my name to Vivek Vasanth Hegde. I shall be called by this name for all purposes

Bennett & Coleman
THE TIMES OF INDIA

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WAR UPDATES

Tomato cultivation may wilt under rising input costs

Consequences of West Asia conflict affecting tomato farmers, with increasing input costs of plastic equipment needed on one end and demand from hotels dropping on other

| Y Maheswara Reddy
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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Due to closure of hotels amid LPG shortage, demand has come down for tomatoes and other vegetables

The ongoing US-Iran-Israel war is set to adversely impact tomato cultivation not only in Karnataka but also across other parts of the country, as soaring crude oil prices create a cascading effect on input costs. With crude oil prices moving steadily upward due to the conflict, the burden on tomato growers is expected to rise significantly.

"Though the tomato prices are hovering around Rs 20 per kg, there is no guarantee of tomatoes available at the same price in future. With the increase in input costs of tomato cultivation, the prices of tomatoes may go northward thus affecting consumers. Farmers growing tomatoes have already felt the pinch. They are paying almost double for the same plastic nets and other plastic products required for tomato cultivation due to the ongoing US-Iran-Israel war," said CMR Srinath, a farmer and a tomato wholesaler from Kolar.

Srinath said that it would become tough for farmers to grow tomatoes due to the increase in input costs. "With the number of farmers growing tomatoes coming down, the production of tomatoes will also come down thus resulting in demand for tomatoes. Farmers need specialised films for soil mulching, row covers, greenhouse structure and irrigation systems including drip irrigation. We need plastic trays to pack tomatoes. I appeal to the Centre and State governments to address the crude oil issue," he said.

Though tomato prices currently hover around Rs 20 per kg, rising input costs, especially doubled plastic expenses, threaten future affordability, leaving farmers already caught in squeeze, said tomato farmer

The shortage of LPG has also affected tomato vendors in Bengaluru. With the closure of PGs and eateries due to the shortage, demand for tomatoes has come down. "Around 60 to 70 tonnes of tomatoes arrive at KR Market from Mandya and Channapatna. Due to the closure of hotels, the demand has come down for tomatoes and other vegetables. Farmers are suffering a lot. They have to spend Rs 3 for transporting a kg of tomatoes from Mandya to Bengaluru. As of now, one kg tomatoes are available for Rs 20. We get Rs 2 as a commission from farmers who supply tomatoes to KR Market," said Ayub, a vegetable agent at KR Market.

The Bangalore Hotels Association has written to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, appealing for a rebate of Rs 2 per unit on the electricity consumed by hotels.

"Till the LPG issue is fixed, we appeal to you to give a rebate of Rs 2 per unit of electricity consumed by hotels as many hoteliers are using induction stoves for cooking food due to the shortage of LPG. We appeal to you to give the rebate on electricity on par with Tamil Nadu Government," the letter read.

Trader booked for illegally hoarding LPG cylinders

A case has been registered at Kengeri Police Station against the owner of Mahalakshmi Enterprises in Mailasandra for allegedly storing LPG cylinders illegally and selling them at inflated prices. The matter surfaced after Food Inspector Mahantagouda Tadlagi of Bengaluru South Taluk received a tip-off on March 14, 2026, at 3 pm regarding the illicit trade.

On investigating, the inspector found that Mahalakshmi Enterprises was storing LPG cylinders from various companies to create an artificial scarcity so they could sell the cylinders at a higher price.

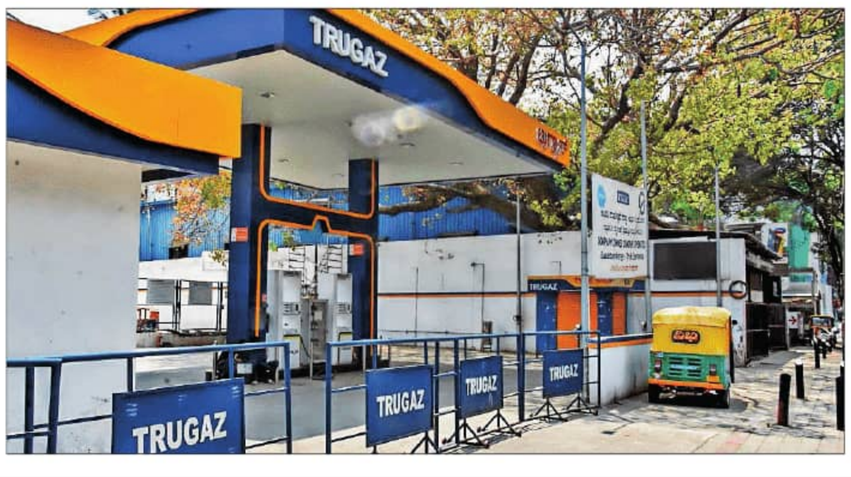
Acting on the tip-off, Inspector Tadlagi alerted the police. During the investigation it was discovered that LPG cylinders from multiple companies were stored illegally. Police have since launched a deeper probe into the case.

The police have booked a case under Sections 3 and 7 of the Essential Commodities Act, Sections 3(1)(b), 4(1)(c), and 7(1)(c) of the Regulation of Supply and Distribution Order, 2000, and Section 318(4) of the BNS 2023. **-BMB**

Out of service

Petrol pumps and LPG stations across city appeared deserted following shutdown amid global supply disruptions

PICS: KAUSHIK JN



Container shipping costs spike, demand from West Asia dips

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Association. He added that thousands of workers depend on the sector and prolonged disruption could affect employment.

Chilli chill

Traders in Haveri district dealing in the famous Byadgi chilli say shipments to West Asian markets have stalled in recent weeks. Nearly 1,000 tonnes of chilli powder were earlier exported every month, but consignments have been stuck at ports for about two weeks.

Exporters are also facing a sharp increase in freight charges. Container shipping costs have risen from around $1,800 to nearly $3,500, significantly raising export expenses. "Containers are stuck at ports and payments worth crores are pending from West Asian buyers," said trader Ganesh Arkachari from the Byadgi market.

For earth's sake

The areca leaf plate manufacturing industry, which produces eco-friendly plates and bowls for export, is also witnessing a slowdown. Several small manufacturing units in districts such as Shivamogga and Tumakuru depend heavily on international orders.

Industry representatives say exports worth 40–50 crore are generated every month from Shivamogga district alone. However, finished products are now piling up in factories due to delayed shipments. "Many entrepreneurs have taken bank loans to set up these units. If exports stop, even paying interest becomes difficult," said C Guruprasad, president of the Shivamogga District Areca Leaf Manufacturing Association.

Poultry, agriculture affected

The poultry sector in districts such as Chitradurga and Davanagere is also experiencing difficulties as egg exports to Arab countries have slowed sharply due to disruptions in international logistics. Farmers say egg prices have dropped to around 4.50 each, forcing them to sell below earlier rates while feed costs continue to rise.

Farmers in Hassan district are also facing losses as exports of vegetables such as coloured capsicum, cabbage and strawberries to Gulf markets have declined. The price of coloured capsicum, which earlier sold for about 100 per kg, has fallen to nearly 50 due to reduced demand.

Other industries

The Channapatna toy industry in Ramanagara district is facing delays in shipments, leaving export orders stuck in factories. In Hubballi and Dharwad, the valve manufacturing sector, which exports nearly half its production to Gulf countries, is dealing with disruptions in trade and transport.

Bidri handicrafts from Bidar, known internationally for their intricate metalwork, are also encountering export hurdles due to disruptions in international flights. Meanwhile, around 160 export-oriented units in Mysuru district that ship spices, food products and garments to Gulf markets are reporting a slowdown in business. Industry representatives say the continuing uncertainty in global logistics and trade routes could further affect Karnataka's export sectors if the conflict continues for a prolonged period.

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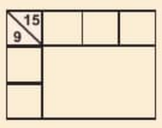
SOLVE IT IN A MINUTE

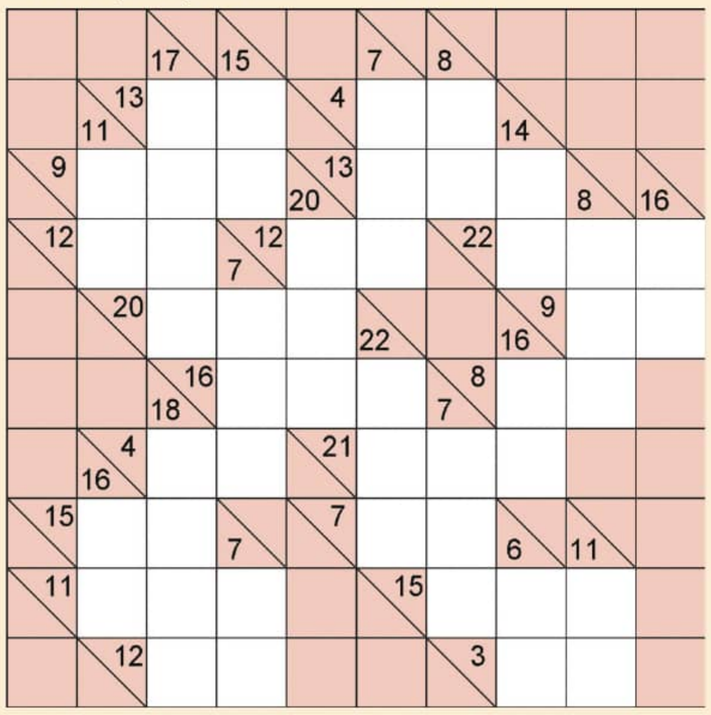
13/30 of students in a class are boys and 1/13 of them have tattoos. If 2 boys have tattoos how many students are in the class?

Kakuro

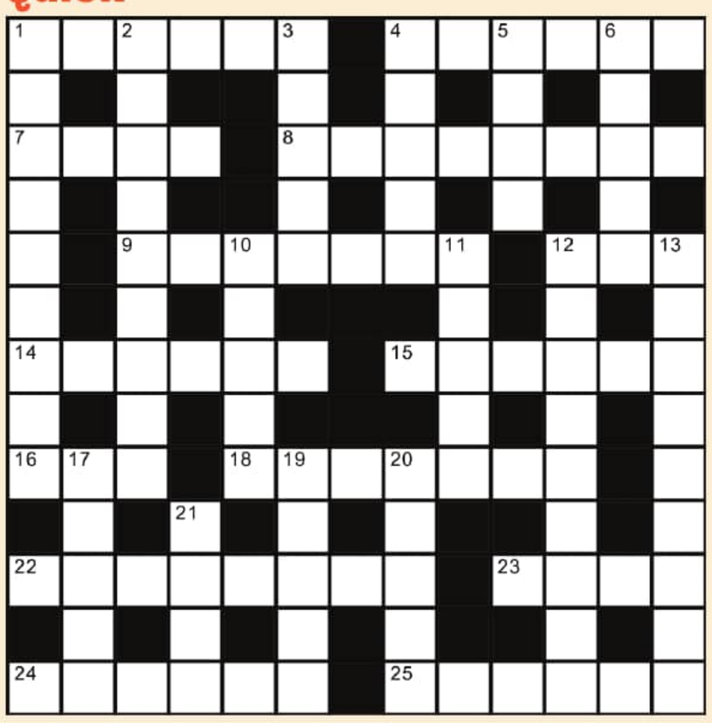
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Go around (6)
4 Industrialist ___ Ambani (6)
7 Pull or lug with hand (4)
8 Great Greek warrior (8)
9 Bollywood's ___ Roshan (7)
12 Wield vigorously (3)
14 Ruddy-complexioned (6)
15 Throws out forcibly (6)
16 Himalayan ox (3)
18 Utterly (7)
22 Fancy that (in a manner of speaking)! (4,4)
23 Unwanted plant (4)
24 Makes sense (4,2)
25 Capricious humour (6)

DOWN

1 Bannerghatta National Park is home to India's first ____ enclosure (9)
2 Tool for haymakers (9)
3 Commence (5)
4 Great Muslim leader (5)
5 Slay (4)
6 Odour (5)
10 Foolish one (5)
11 Zooni in Fanaa (5)
12 Elephant or rhinoceros (9)
13 ___, Today and Tomorrow? (9)
17 In front (5)
19 __ __ on : in a superior position to (3,2)
20 Permit (5)
21 In addition to (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: X EQUALS H

XG CXM FOE, TMGV. XG CXM FOEEMB, BGOFXGV.

Linemaro

I am bad in Geography but I can tell you that you live in my heart

Mindchow

Trees are earth's endless effort to speak to the listening heaven

Joke of the day

I've now got this nice little apartment in New York, one of those L-shaped ones... unfortunately, it's a lower case l.

Loop

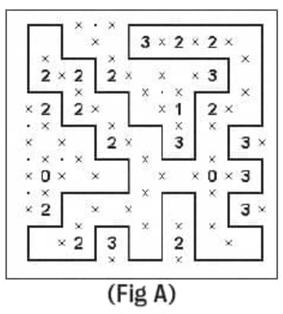
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

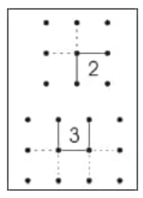
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

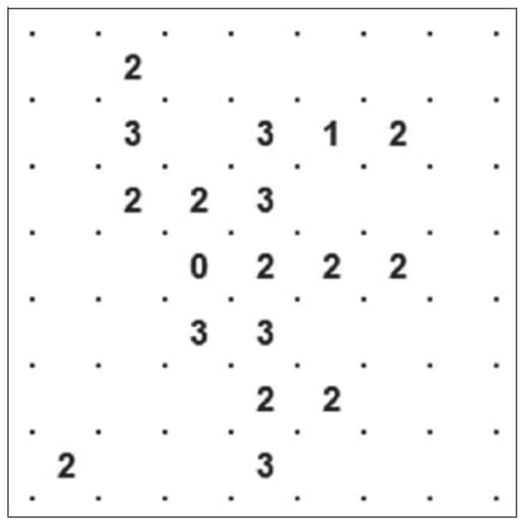
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



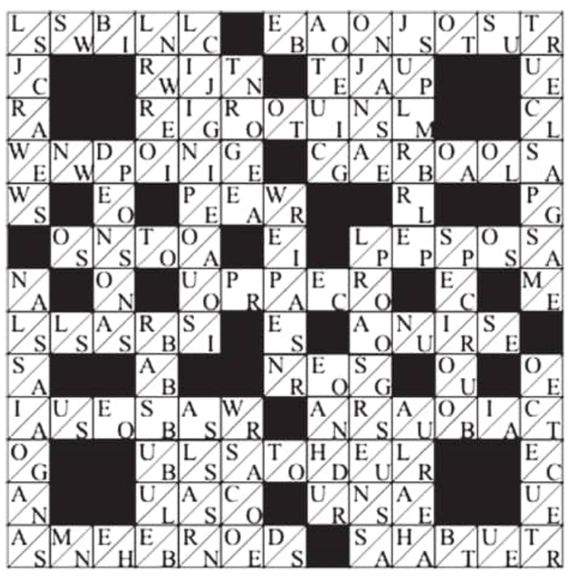
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



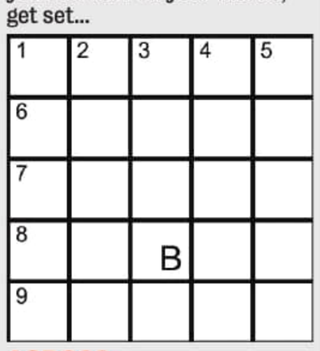
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

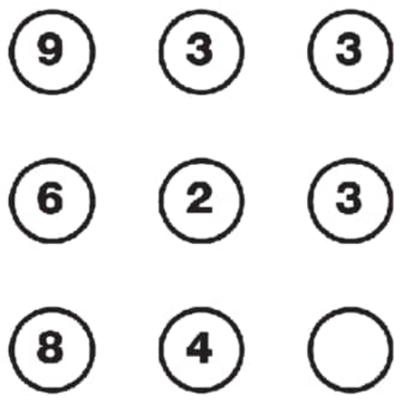
1 P Mart; 6 Hales; 7 Mi Goa; 8 In orb; 9 I C spy

DOWN

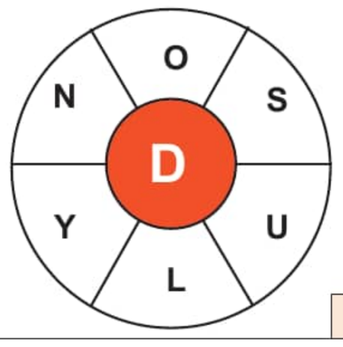
1 Trass; 2 Proem; 3 Bail I; 4 Gamic; 5 Hypno

Mensapuzzle

Which number is missing?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

04 Average; **05** Good; **07** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

	5		8		6		3	
		8		3		2		
	9	1				8	7	
1	3						6	9
			3		7			
8	2						1	7
	8	6				7	2	
		3		5		6		
	4		2		8		9	

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 6
3 5 4 4

Medium = 24
5 5 7 2

Hard = 8
2 3 6 4

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

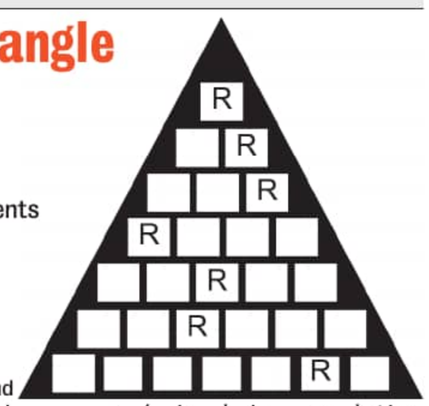
Differences: 1. Golf club is longer. 2. Ball is moved. 3. Bush is missing. 4. Zipper is added to jacket. 5. Man has less hair. 6. Golf bag is moved.

Riddler

Like silver brewed from other things, For crafting candlesticks and rings. Tin or zinc may take the lead And goblets make from this instead. What is it?

Alpha triangle

1 Right letter
2 Infra-red abbr
3 Evergreen tree
4 Overabundant
5 Conflagrations
6 Font embellishments
7 Split

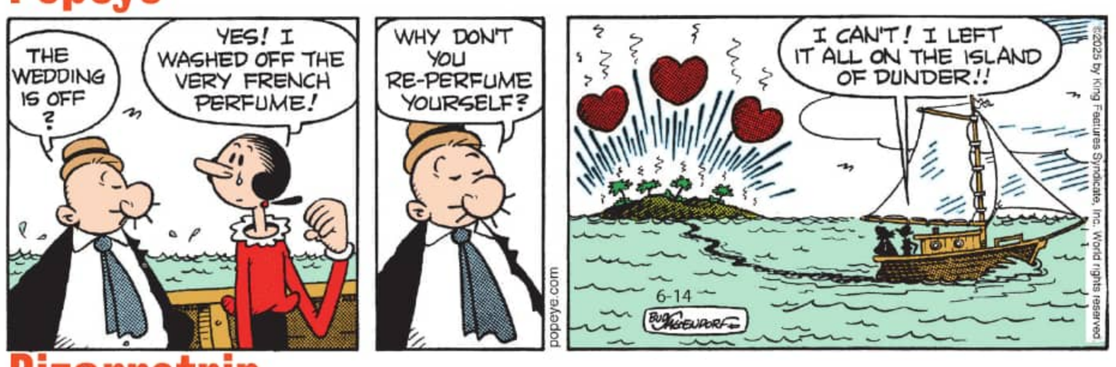


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye


THE WEDDING IS OFF?
YES! I WASHED OFF THE VERY FRENCH PERFUME!
WHY DON'T YOU RE-PERFUME YOURSELF?
I CAN'T! I LEFT IT ALL ON THE ISLAND OF DUNDER!!
6-14
popeye.com

Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

I NEED A BOTTLE OF WINE FOR A HOLIDAY PARTY I'LL BE ATTENDING...
SOMETHING THAT'LL REFLECT MY DISCERNING TASTE IN FINE VINTAGES
HOW ABOUT SOME "CHÂTEAU LE SCREWTOP"?
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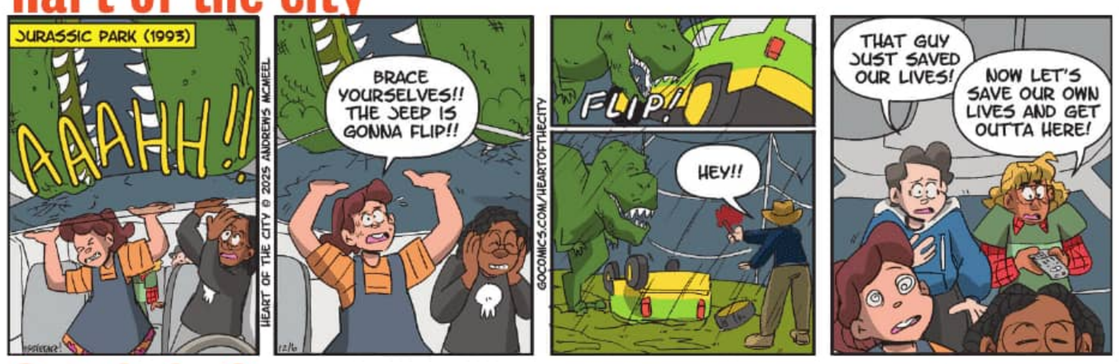
12/14

Hart of the city


JURASSIC PARK (1993)
AAAHH!!
BRACE YOURSELVES!! THE JEEP IS GONNA FLIP!!
FLIP!
HEY!!
THAT GUY JUST SAVED OUR LIVES!
NOW LET'S SAVE OUR OWN LIVES AND GET OUTTA HERE!
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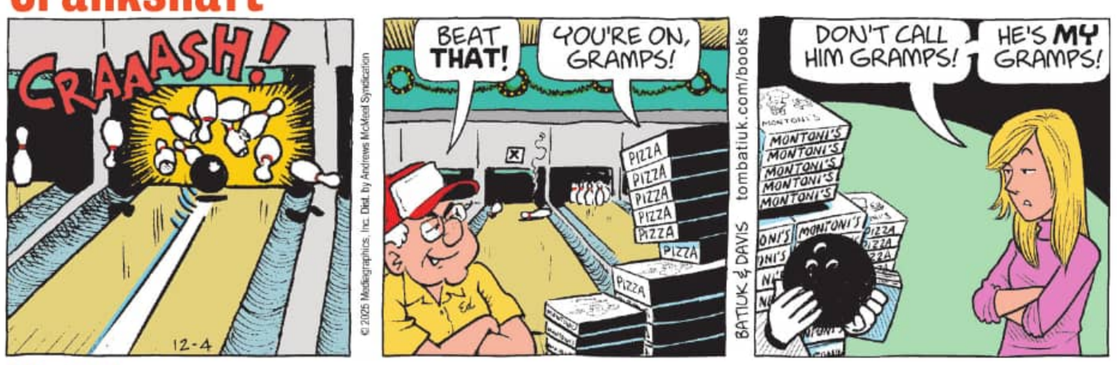
Crankshaft



Mutts

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IT ALL STARTED WITH THAT PUNK—GOLDILOCKS!
mutts.com
www.kingfeatures.com
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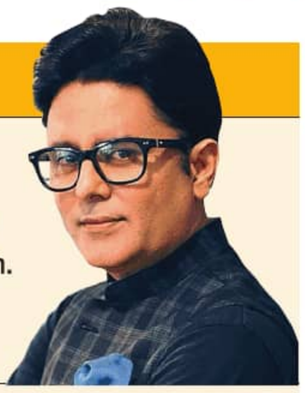
WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR



If it's your birthday today

Emotional insight guides your choices. Love feels nurturing and deeply connected. Career decisions benefit from intuition paired with logic. Financial planning brings peace of mind. Travel supports personal growth and reflection. Home becomes a place of healing and warmth. Listening to your inner voice helps everything flow with greater ease and clarity.

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20

If something feels stuck, impatience may push you to quit entirely. That would be unwise. Step away briefly, rest, and return with a clearer head and renewed perspective later.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20

Searching for logic now blocks understanding. Trust the process instead. Let go of over thinking, believe events are aligning, and allow life to unfold naturally toward the best outcome.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21

Impulsiveness today leads to missteps. Slow your pace, reduce rushing, and think carefully before acting. Extra reflection reveals consequences you'd otherwise overlook in haste or distraction.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23

Doubts about your direction may arise soon. Don't change course yet. Pause, observe unfolding signs, and wait patiently for clarity before making any significant decisions or commitments.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

There's a risk of overspending on ideas unlikely to succeed. Long-term planning feels unclear, so choose caution. Review finances carefully and avoid investing in uncertain or poorly defined ventures.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23

Avoid placing excessive pressure on relationships now. Your standards can overwhelm others. Practice tolerance, soften expectations, and remember people operate differently without intending disappointment or failure.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22

Major issues rarely disturb you, but small irritations do. Step back, widen perspective, and stop magnifying minor annoyances that distract from the bigger, more meaningful picture.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22

Overreacting to negativity is the real danger today. Most issues aren't as serious as they appear. Pause, breathe, count slowly, and allow situations to resolve naturally without escalation.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22

Big life changes have been on your mind, and opportunities may appear soon. Proceed carefully. Emotional intensity can cloud judgment, so avoid rushing decisions that require clear, steady thinking.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20

It's easy to judge others, but focus on your own conduct. Cutting corners or bending rules will surface eventually, causing embarrassment. Integrity now protects reputation and long-term credibility.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19

Ideas are abundant, but not all are workable. Slow enthusiasm slightly and choose ambitions carefully. Focus energy on goals with structure, realism, and genuine potential for success.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20

Strong energy needs mindful direction. If misused, it backfires. Channel actions toward helping others as well as yourself, ensuring efforts create positive outcomes for everyone involved.

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SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M

x = # of students in class
y = # of boys in class
1/13 y = # of boys with tattoos
y = 13/30 * x
y = 26
26 = 13/30 * x
26 * 30 /13 = x
2 * 30 = x
60 students = x

RIDDLER Pewter

FAST FIVE

T	R	A	M	P
S	E	L	A	H
A	M	I	G	O
R	O	B	I	N
S	P	I	C	Y

BULL'S EYE

duly, loud, sold, sound, SOUNDLY, undo, unsold

STRIKE OUT

S	W	I	L	L		B	O	N	J	O	U	R		
C		W	I	T		T	A	U		E				
R		E	G	O	T	I	S	M		L				
E	N	D	I	N	G		C	A	B	A	L	A		
W		O		E	A	R		L		P				
I	S	O	B	A	R		A	R	A	B	I	C		
S		A			N	O	G		U	R	S			
A	N		U	P	P	E	R		C		E			
O	N	T	O		I		P	E	S	O	S			
S	L	A	B	S		E		O	U	R	S			
N		L	A	C		U	S	E			U			
G		B	L	A	T	H	E	R			C			
I	S	O	B	A	R		A	R	A	B	I	C		
S		A			N	O	G		U	R	S			
A	N		U	P	P	E	R		C		E			
O	N	T	O		I		P	E	S	O	S			
W		O		E	A	R		L		P				
E	N	D	I	N	G		C	A	B	A	L	A		
R		E	G	O	T	I	S	M		L				
C		W	I	T		T	A	U		E				
S	W	I	L	L		B	O	N	J	O	U	R		

QUICK

A	D	D	S	U	P		W	H	I	M	S	Y		
	A		U		U		O		R			A		
W	E	L	L	W	E	L	L		W	E	E	D		
	H		P		N		L		D			R		
Y	A	K		T	O	T	A	L	L	Y		E		
L		R		O			H		O			T		
F	L	O	R	I	D		E	J	E	C	T	S		
R		F		D			A		A			E		
E	H	R	I	T	H	I	K		P	L	Y			
T		C		R		D		L		L				
T	O	T	E		A	C	H	I	L	E	S			
U		I		T		A		I		M				
B	Y	P	A	S	S		M	U	K	E	S	H		

STRIKE OUT

S	N	E	E	R	E	D		S	A	B	E	R		
N		L	A	C		U	S	E			U			
G		B	L	A	T	H	E	R			C			
I	S	O	B	A	R		A	R	A	B	I	C		
S		A			N	O	G		U	R	S			
A	N		U	P	P	E	R		C		E			
O	N	T	O		I		P	E	S	O	S			
W		O		E	A	R		L		P				
E	N	D	I	N	G		C	A	B	A	L	A		
R		E	G	O	T	I	S	M		L				
C		W	I	T		T	A	U		E				
S	W	I	L	L		B	O	N	J	O	U	R		

MENSA PUZZLE

2. In each row, divide the left hand value by the centre value to get the right hand number.

QUOTE UNCODE

He who can, does.
He who cannot, teaches.

SUDOKU

4	5	2	8	7	6	9	3	1
6	7	8	9	3	1	2	5	4
3	9	1	5	2	4	8	7	6
1	3	7	4	8	2	5	6	9
5	6	9	3	1	7	4	8	2
8	2	4	6	9	5	3	1	7
9	8	6	1	4	3	7	2	5
2	1	3	7	5	9	6	4	8
7	4	5	2	6	8	1	9	3

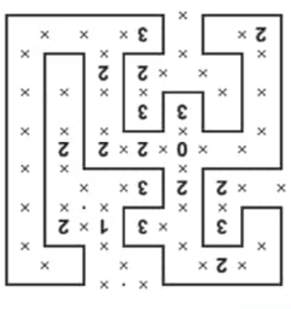
ALPHA TRIANGLE

R, In, Fir, Rife, Fires, Serifs, Fissure.

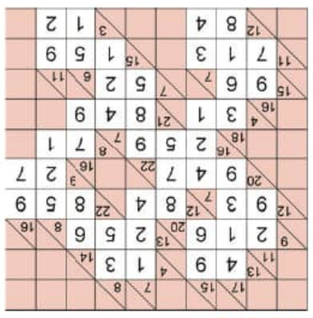
GO FIGURE

Easy
3 + 4 − 5 + 4 = 6
Medium
2 x 7 + 5 + 5 = 24
Hard
2 x 3 + 6 − 4 = 8

LOOP



KAKURO



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 # Secret plan
Maya Hawke teases "secret" plans for summer 2026, says she "can't reveal" details yet

EYES ON THE PRIZE

Priyanka Chopra as presenter will be highlight of Oscars back home

The 98th edition of the Academy Awards will unfold on Sunday, March 15, 2026, at the iconic Dolby Theatre in Ovation Hollywood, bringing together some of the film industry's biggest names for a ceremony that blends tradition, innovation, and a new milestone for filmmaking recognition.

Hosted by late-night comedian and television personality Conan O'Brien, the ceremony will be broadcast live at 5 pm PT / 8 pm ET on ABC and streamed on Hulu.

With a packed lineup of presenters, strong contenders across major categories, and the introduction of a new award recognising casting directors, the 2026 Oscars promise to be a landmark night for Hollywood.

The Academy has assembled a high-profile roster of presenters for the evening. Among those expected to take the stage are actors Robert Downey Jr., Anne Hathaway, Nicole Kidman, Pedro Pascal, Sigourney Weaver, Priyanka Chopra and Ewan McGregor.

The ceremony will mark a return to the Oscar stage for host Conan O'Brien, whose comedic style and sharp satire have long been staples of American late-night television. Organisers have indicated that the opening segment will feature a globally themed film sequence, setting the tone for an internationally focused celebration of cinema, as per The Hollywood Reporter.

This year's race is headlined by several films that have dominated the awards conversation.

In the Best Picture category, leading contenders include 'One Battle After Another', 'Sinners', 'Bugonia', 'Hamnet,' 'Marty Supreme,' and 'Frankenstein.'

Among them, 'One Battle After Another', directed by Paul Thomas Anderson, has drawn particular attention as the filmmaker seeks his first Oscar win after previously earning 11 nominations.

–ANI

Workers carry an Oscar statue ahead of the 98th Annual Academy Awards outside the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California

SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Cricket fanatic!

Model-cum-actress Nimika Ratnakar, an avid cricket fan, was elated at the chance to meet cricketer Shreyas Iyer during Prithvi Shaw's engagement with Akriti Agarwal, in Mumbai on March 8.

"I attended the engagement with my parents. I was delighted to meet Shreyas Iyer there. I love watching cricket matches. I still remember the thrill of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) winning the maiden IPL title against Punjab Kings last year. I was at Narendra Modi Stadium," Ratnakar said. Nimika debuted in Sandalwood with Rama Dhanya that was released in 2018.

"The filming of my next movie Wild Tiger Safari is on the verge of completion. Wild Tiger Safari is directed by Chandramouli, known for writing punchy dialogues for KGF. The teaser unveiled in Dubai in January and its first song last month got an encouraging response," she said. Phoenix, helmed by veteran director Om Prakash Rao, is her second upcoming film.

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